DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 357 908 RC 019 137

| | |
|---|---|
| AUTHOR | Cahape, Patricia |
| TITLE | Blueprints for Indian Education: Research and Development Needs for the 1990s. ERIC Digest. |
| INSTITUTION | ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, Charleston, WV. |
| SPONS AGENCY | Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC. |
| REPORT NO | EDO-RC-93-2 |
| PUB DATE | Mar 93 |
| CONTRACT | RI88062016 |
| NOTE | 3p. |
| AVAILABLE FROM | ERIC/CRESS, Appalachia Educational Laboratory, P.O. Box 1348, Charleston, WV 25325 (free). |
| PUB TYPE | Information Analyses - ERIC Clearinghouse Products (071) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01/PC01 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | *American Indian Education; Data Collection; *Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; Information Dissemination; Program Evaluation; *Research and Development; *Research Needs |
| IDENTIFIERS | ERIC Digests; *Indian Nations At Risk Task Force; *White House Conference on Indian Education |

ABSTRACT

Two landmark efforts to describe the condition of American Indian and Alaska Native education nationwide and to call for specific solutions took place in the early 1990s. These efforts were the Indian Nations At Risk Task Force and the White House Conference on Indian Education. This digest summarizes Task Force and Conference recommendations concerning research, development, evaluation, and dissemination needs. Task Force members and Conference delegates recommended: (1) basic research on bilingualism and language development and on fetal alcohol syndrome and effects; (2) applied research on adult illiteracy in Native communities, current adult literacy programs, unmet needs and progress of Native students in higher education, elementary and secondary student enrollment and achievement, Native student strengths related to giftedness, and demography; (3) standardized methods of data collection and reporting, leading to a national database on Native education; (4) development work on alternative assessment or unbiased standardized tests, effective parent support programs, programs for exceptional American Indians and Alaska Natives of all ages, alcohol and substance abuse issues, student performance, and the unique abilities of Native applicants to teacher education programs; (5) evaluation to identify valuable programs and materials concerned with bilingual learning, parent support, and computers and other technologies; and (6) mechanisms for dissemination of research, development, and evaluation results. (SV)

ED357908

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ERIC DIGEST

Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools March 1993

# Blueprints for Indian Education: Research and Development Needs for the 1990s

by Patricia Cahape

Digest EDO-RC-93-2

TWO LANDMARK EFFORTS to describe the condition of American Indian and Alaska Native education nationwide and to call for specific solutions took place in the early 1990s. These efforts were (1) the Indian Nations At Risk Task Force (INARTF) and (2) the White House Conference on Indian Education (WHCIE).

This Digest—which synthesizes research, development, evaluation, and dissemination needs—is the first in a planned series that will summarize the findings of the Task Force and Conference. Other Digests in the series will deal more specifically with (1) funding, (2) the call for new and restructured institutions, (3) the preservation of Native languages and culture, and (4) recommendations for making mainstream schools better places for Native students.

**The two efforts**

The work of the INARTF and the WHCIE resulted in a comprehensive description of the condition of education for American Indians and Alaska Natives today, with many clear directives about where it should go from here. The INARTF, established in early 1990, was the first of these to complete its activities and publish its findings. By early 1992, the Task Force had published its final report (INARTF, 1991). The Task Force also commissioned 20 papers written by eminent American Indian and Alaska Native scholars. The WHCIE, authorized by Congress in 1988, took place in January of 1992. The outcome was a two-volume report (WHCIE, 1992), which included 113 resolutions adopted by the delegates to the conference.

**Research—adding to the knowledge base**

The two efforts produced many recommendations for research that would supply basic or applied knowledge—about the psychology of learning, the conditions of learning, or interactions between the two. Basic research may not have clear, immediate applications, whereas applied research usually aims to develop implications for practice. Both, however, provide a foundation for development efforts. The Conference delegates and Task Force members recommended basic research in:

- bilingualism, leading to a better understanding of language development (INARTF, 1991, 28; WHCIE, 1992, Resolution 7-1);
- Fetal Alcohol Effects/Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAE/FAS) (WHCIE, 1992, Resolutions 4-2 and 5-10).

Delegates at the White House Conference recommended that FAE/FAS research be conducted by the Indian Health Service, a recommendation that suggests application.

In another resolution, delegates called for an initiative within the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Indian Education to support a range of research by *American Indian/Alaska Native scholars* aggressively committed to addressing the education needs of American Indian and Alaska Native communities (WHCIE, 1992, Resolution T9-1). Much research about Natives has been conducted by non-Natives; more research by Natives—research that presents an "insider" view—is *essential to future progress*.

The INARTF and WHCIE called for applied research in the following areas:

- extent of adult illiteracy in Native communities and the adequacy of current adult literacy funding and programs (INARTF, 1991, 30);
- Native adult education and occupation needs (WHCIE, 1992, Resolution 11-1);
- unmet needs of Native students interested in higher education (INARTF, 1991, 30);
- progress in higher education, including enrollment, retention, and graduation (Wright, 1991);
- elementary and secondary student enrollment and achievement (WHCIE, 1992, Resolutions 3-4, 3-8, and 5-3);
- Native students' strengths related to identification for gifted programs, perhaps through the development of case study research (Tonemah, 1991); and
- demographic characteristics of Native populations.

Many suggestions address issues related to data collection. Charleston and King (1992) conclude that the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) should collaborate to establish a comprehensive national and state-by-state database on Native education. Hatch (1991) notes that the Indian Health Service, the BIA, the ED, and the U.S. Census Bureau each use different methods to collect and report data, making comparisons difficult. Such differences may lead to a lack of awareness by federal government officials of the problems facing Natives. Nichols (1991) reminds planners to gather only relevant and appropriate data. If appropriate measures cannot be found, alternatives must be devised. Hatch (1991) urges data collectors to find ways to use the existing educational and vocational information available at the tribal level.

The WHCIE resolved that additional measures could be undertaken to set an agenda for research and development for Indian education. A National Study Group on Pedagogy in Indian Education, possibly funded through America 2000, might develop such an agenda (WHCIE, Resolution 3-2). Federally-funded regional American Indian and Alaska Native Educational Research Institutes might also develop and implement regional educational research plans, study effective teaching practices, and establish a repository of research information (WHCIE, 1992, Resolution 8-R-1). Mandated Indian Advisory Councils to state education agencies could also collect, analyze, and disseminate local, state, and national data about Indian education (WHCIE, 1992, Resolution 3-8). A National Tracking System was also recommended (WHCIE, 1992, Resolution 11-10).

**Development—new programs and materials**

The INARTF and the WHCIE cite need for the following development work as particularly pressing:

- alternative assessment or unbiased standardized tests to assess student achievement and abilities;
- effective parent support programs (WHCIE, 1992, Resolutions 3-14 and 6-1);

RC019137

- instruction, curriculum, and program administration for exceptional American Indians and Alaska Natives of all ages (WHCIE, 1992, Resolution 5-5); and
- alcohol and substance abuse issues in Indian communities (WHCIE, 1992, Resolutions 4-4, 4-7, 4-12).

The first of these points (unbiased student assessment) pertains to the following applications:

- performance of students in regular education (WHCIE, 1992, Resolution 3-4),
- performance of exceptional students (WHCIE, 1992, Resolution 5-5),
- unique abilities of Native gifted and talented students (Tonemah, 1991), and
- unique abilities of Native applicants to teacher education programs (WHCIE, 1992, Resolution T9-2).

The WHCIE and INARTF participants urged that a variety of organizations and individuals be involved in the development of the new Indian programs, methods, and materials, on the following bases:

- Colleges and universities should be involved in research driven by needs defined by Indian communities (INARTF, 1991, 31) and be linked by an electronic network (WHCIE, 1992, Resolution T9-11).
- Research on pedagogy should be conducted with Native education departments and tribal colleges (Reyhner, 1991).
- Research designed to improve education programs and academic achievement should be funded and made available through a national research and school improvement center for Native education (INARTF, 1991, 29).

**Evaluation—finding out what works and what doesn't**

The WHCIE and INARTF called, in particular, for evaluation to establish which programs and materials, in the following categories, have proven value in Native education:

- bilingual learning (INARTF, 1991, 28);
- parent support (WHCIE, 1992, Resolution 3-14);
- the effective use of computers and other technologies in Indian education (Berg & Ohler, 1991); and
- programs and projects shown to be effective for Native students, including acults (INARTF, 1991, 30; WHCIE, 1992, Resolutions 7-1 and 11-8).

Paul (1991) urges a democratic form of program evaluation for Native early childhood and other efforts. Parents and teachers would collaborate in deciding the goals of educational activities and in selecting ways to measure the worth of the activities in meeting goals. Butterfield and Pepper (1991) urge the study of exemplary programs that promote parent participation, and they second the suggestion of a participant who testified in one of the INARTF hearings that an "Indian National Diffusion Network" be formed.

**Dissemination—sharing what is learned**

Recommendations about research, development, or evaluation activities include calls for disseminating results. Possible mechanisms that could be employed to accomplish this purpose include the following:

- an Office of Indian Education (U.S. Department of Education) research initiative (WHCIE, 1992, Resolution T9-1);
- a repository of research that is fully accessible by regional tribal groups, organizations and local education agencies (WHCIE, 1992, Resolution 8-R-1);
- a National Native Education Institute (Berg & Ohler, 1991);
- regional American Indian/Alaska Native Educational Research Centers (WHCIE, 1992, Resolution 3-4);
- centers for Native education at the state level (Charleston & King, 1992); and
- information services from a variety of centers, museums, or archives (WHCIE, 1992, Resolutions 11-8 and T9-15).

Nichols (1991) noted that "Since 1928, the need for a national database on Native education has been pointed out in virtually every study related to Native education." National information centers or clearinghouses were also proposed for the collection and dissemination of information about (1) programs and materials for drug abuse education and prevention (WHCIE, Resolution 4-12), and (2) educational technology for improving schools and learning (INARTF, 1991, 29).

**Conclusion**

Perhaps at no other time in this century has the community of American Indians and Alaska Natives been better positioned to take charge of this agenda for change—with its own skilled researchers and institutions already in place. Taken together, this is an ambitious research agenda, forward-looking, and by its very comprehensiveness, full of hope.

**References**


Berg, P., & Ohler, J. (1991). *Strategic plans for use of modern technology in the education of American Indian and Alaska Native students.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 343 765)

Butterfield, R., & Pepper, F. (1991). *Improving parental participation in elementary and secondary education for American Indian and Alaska Native students.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 343 763)

Charleston, G., & King, G. (1992). Foreword. In P. Cahape & C. Howley (Eds.), *Indian Nations At Risk: Listening to the People* (pp. vii-xii). Charleston, WV: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 339 588)

Hatch, J. (1991). *American Indian and Alaska Native adult education and vocational training programs: Historical beginnings, present conditions and future directions.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 343 773)

Indian Nations At Risk Task Force. (1991). *Indian Nations At Risk: An educational strategy for action.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 339 587)

Nichols, R. (1991). *Continuous evaluation of Native education programs for American Indian and Alaska Native students.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 343 760)

Paul, A. (1991). *Early childhood education in American Indian and Alaska Native communities.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 343 761)

Reyhner, J. (1991). *Plans for dropout prevention and special school support services for American Indian and Alaska Native students.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 343 762)

Tonemah, S. (1991). *Gifted and talented American Indian and Alaska Native students.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 343 769)

White House Conference on Indian Education. (1992). *The final report of the White House Conference on Indian Education (Executive Summary).* Washington, DC: Author. (Clearinghouse Accession No. RC 018 955)

Wright, B. (1991). *American Indian and Alaska Native higher education: Toward a new century of academic achievement and cultural integrity.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 343 771)



American Indian and Alaska Native educators who participated in both the INARTF and the WHCIE served as reviewers of this synthesis, which was prepared by Patricia Cahape of the ERIC/CRESS staff.

This publication was prepared with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, under contract no. RI-88-062016. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement or the Department of Education.

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools is operated by the Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL), Inc. AEL serves as the Regional Educational Laboratory for Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. AEL is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

EDO-RC-93-2